

Hunt's Disqualification Gives Lauda Spanish GP

By Pete Lyons

MADRID—Snow was still fresh and white on the Sierra de Guadarrama north and west of the Madrid circuit, but after two days of rather chilly, windy practice race day was springlike at last. The greatest warmth of the day had begun to fade by 4 pm, when Spain's new king arrived by helicopter, and at 4:15 conditions were excellent for racing.

Somehow James Hunt always seems to botch his start while Niki Lauda does good ones; anyway they got into the tight first corner with the Ferrari ahead. As things settled down and Lauda, Hunt, Depailler, and Mass went into their high speed, NASCAR-type holding action, Vittorio Brambilla found himself leading the second bunch. Only until Jacques Laffite got the Ligier Matra into its stride, though, pulled by into fifth place after 11 laps, and went off on his own—a good performance from the screaming French car.

Brambilla then went off the road, twice; he rejoined the race the first time looking dusty and disheveled, but a rear suspension parallel link had been damaged and when it snapped the orange March went off again into the turn one catch fences, this time for good.

Behind the race for the lead, there was a lot of action for awhile. Vittorio Brambilla had surged ahead into third place at the start, but soon was overwhelmed by Depailler and then by Mass, and gradually fell back. He did his best to hold onto fifth place from the desperate assault of the next bunch, but soon had to give in to Jacques Laffite in the screaming Matra. Next it was Gunnar Nilsson's turn and the

JPS driver, on his way by, eventually, paused a moment to—well, the young Swede denies they actually touched but the "Monza Gorilla" went spinning off into the dirt. Perhaps as he turned around and took off the right way again, looking dusty and disheveled, he might have passed his mind back to the Race Of Champions when he did the same thing to a couple of JPS drivers. The excursion cracked his rear suspension and Vittorio soon was side-lined for good.

Poor Laffite's otherwise excellent performance was ruined by gear selection trouble which required a pit stop, but that let Nilsson up to fifth and Andretti right behind him in sixth. All they had to worry about then was Clay Regazzoni attacking them in the other Ferrari. In fact, it looked bad for Lotus when Andretti had to retire with gear selector troubles too, and that left no cushion to defend young Nilsson. He was doing a fine job on his own, however, holding off the vastly more experienced Regga for a long while, pumping his arms furiously, but looking reasonably confident. How it might have turned out the last few laps we'll never know, because it was the Ferrari that had to stop at the pits. A leak from the car's pressure gauge was spraying gasoline into Clay's lap. That let Nilsson free to run into the place that eventually became second. He was glad for the relief because his own gears were getting hard to change—he had a big blister on his hand by then—and the engine wasn't pulling well, either.

One more bunch back was Jody Scheckter, until his engine's oil pump belt failed. Next was Jean-Pierre, until his car's electrical system failed. Finally there was the one dice that went all the



Reutemann, here holding off a determined John Watson just before the Penske's engine noisily expired, finished a fine third and got himself four championship points.

way to the flag. Carlos Reutemann had a very determined Chris Amon in his mirrors, but nothing Chrissie could do with his new Ensign could get it by the wide Brabham/Alfa. Good to watch, though, and Carlos Pace made it nearly a sandwich by the end, despite two frightening half-spins of his own.

It was quite an eventful debut for the very nicely made new Ensign, also, for Amon had one narrow escape early on when John Watson looped the Penske

under his very nose. A number of laps later the Penske engine blew up in an oily big bang, leaving the road entering a fast downhill left-handed curve very slippery. On the oil Laffite had a giant spin right across Amon's front end.

By the end, 11 of the 24 starters were out, Emerson Fittipaldi, after using up two cars in three laps. Well, not exactly; on the warmup lap his regular Copersucar sprang a brake caliper leak and he

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'76 F-1 Rules Slow The Cars Down, But Not Much

MADRID—The potential effect of the new F-1 regulations, especially those which moved the wings forward and which cut down the airboxes, was the main question at practice at Jarama. While most teams had managed to test their revised cars beforehand, and some—generally those who earned grid places at the front end of the pack—had been able to afford a test program at Jarama itself, still the final answer could only come in open competition.

The answer seemed to be, yes, the cars are a little slower. Two years ago, Lauda had put the 312B3 Ferrari on the pole at 1:18.445. This time, the best he could do with the 312T2 (once again, as at Brands Hatch, running with conventional rear suspension and not de Dion) was 1:18.84. Take a bit off for his sore ribs, perhaps; also take a significant bit off for the fact that Goodyear isn't supplying soft-compound tires anymore; still it was pretty obvious the new regulations had taken an edge off the cars.

Whether it was any significant edge in terms of real-life safety enhancement is perhaps another question.

The loss of performance was not so much in engine power—for the loss of the ram effect of the tall airbox was just about equalled by the reduction in drag—but the reduction in wing efficiency was quite noticeable in most cars. This was twofold. Moving the wing closer to the area of turbulent airflow behind the cockpit and between the wheels had its own effect. It also emerged, however, that the most cunningly designed of the old air boxes had not only scooped air into the engines, but had also molded external airflow around behind the scoops themselves and delivered it more smoothly to the wings.

Tyrrell came to Spain with new, bulky, obviously painstakingly designed airboxes incorporating a pair of projecting long snorkels either side of the driver's head. Late in practice, these were removed as an experiment—and both drivers immediately reported the handling had improved. The reason was that the new airboxes had further harmed airflow over the wing. "It's not a night and day difference," said Jody Scheckter. "It's more like night and daybreak." But both the cars went to the starting grid with no airboxes.

McLaren arrived in Spain with its own special "solution." Some observers were hailing it as a splendid new idea, although in fact the M23 was showing it two years ago. The reasoning was sound enough: "If the wing works better the farther behind the engine it is, and the wing position is established by the allowable distance behind the rear wheel centerline—why, let's move the rear wheels back."

To the more-or-less normal wheelbase extension established by an eight-inch bellhousing spacer was added about an inch with a new bracket for the rear sway bar and another inch or so gained with longer radius rods, which gave the half shafts as much rearward angle as the U-joints could safely accommodate. The total additional length of free airspace for the rear wing was a pretty conservative two inches or so, according to Gordon Coppuck, but when you're trying to beat regulations, every inch counts.

Maybe that's why the officials were so keen to enforce the regulations, even to the nearest eighth-inch—huh, Gordon?—Pete Lyons

Mayer And Ligier Say They'll Appeal Disqualifications

MADRID, Spain—It was, ironically enough, the Formula One Constructors' Association which itself invited the CSI to send a technical committee to Jarama to stringently oversee everyone's solutions to the new regulations.

"We wanted to get off on the right foot with them," explained March Engineering's Max Mosley. "We asked them to be as severe as they could be, not to overlook anything." The CSI bureaucrats, obviously jumping at an opportunity to prove they weren't soft on infractions of their own rules, as has repeatedly been charged in the past—most notoriously at last year's Spanish GP—took the constructors at their word.

In the post-race inspection session they

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CSI Determined To Be Firm In Rules Breech

Report By Pete Lyons

MADRID—James Hunt lost the Spanish Grand Prix by 1.8 centimeters. Call it five-eighths of an inch.

It was by that amount that the rear track measurement of his McLaren M23 was found to exceed the new FIA regulations—that had only just that day gone into force.

Apparently it was a discrepancy that could easily have been adjusted out, a matter of a few turns on suspension links, and obviously it was a discrepancy that could have played no genuine role in his fine, second-ever GP victory. It was such a small discrepancy that McLaren's Teddy Mayer immediately appealed to the FIA.

But the Spanish race officials and the CSI officials on the scene were determined to show a firm hand. Some two hours after the checkered flag, they took the trophy away from James and handed it to Niki Lauda—making this, if it stands, the third victory out of four GPs for the

fracture is, so I don't feel any pain there. But it does hurt above it and below it, particularly when I am sliding the car and I stop the slide. Then my ribs press against the side of the seat and, yes, it hurts. And also, I can feel the broken ends of the ribs grinding against each other. I don't know how much it is slowing me down, but I imagine it is slowing me down a little, of course."

Not a whole hell of a lot. For the fourth GP this year he qualified on the front row of the grid, second best by three tenths to Hunt. Lauda did not take it noticeably easy during practice, he did not break off any session early and go home to rest, and on race morning he answered all questions about the state of his physique with a terse German idiom: "Es geht." It'll do.

And do it did, for awhile. At the flag, James made another of his typically indifferent getaways, and Niki's Ferrari surged ahead into the first of Jarama's many tight turns. Patrick Depailler, third on the grid with the new six-wheeler



The Tyrrell six-wheeler P34/2 ran like a rocket and qualified third fastest. A brake problem caused driver Patrick Depailler to shunt the car during the race.

road when the brakes failed—and rapidly settled in behind his team leader to make it an easy—and very refreshing—McLaren one-two.

The late stages of the race ruined that, however, for without warning Jochen's engine scattered in an oily bang right before the pits. So it was James alone who got to stand up on the victory podium with a garland around his neck and have his picture taken with King Juan Carlos I. And James alone who had to try to believe that such a thing could be taken from him by five-eighths of an inch.

"Can't see how they can do that," remarked a bemused British observer, "After all, the King's already shaken his hand. I'd have thought that made it unalterable."

No. Last year there had been a movement to limit the performance levels of GP cars, and in September the CSI of the FIA announced a new body of rules that was mainly intended to enhance safety a little bit. These additions to the already pretty stringent Formula One rules took effect at the first European GP of 1976, the Spanish one.

Some of the rules were aimed at driver protection: stronger front ends for foot protection, a "dash hoop" roll bar ahead of the instrument panel. Others were intended to cut car performance a bit: moving the rear wings forward by 20 centimeters (about eight inches), reducing the height of the ram-air engine scoops. But besides that, the CSI undertook to ensure that the cars as seen in 1975 should not be developed to any more extreme dimensions.

They went around measuring all the cars at one race, and announced that henceforth the largest measurements they found would be the maximums allowed. The constructors, it may be said, were cooperative and agreeable.

Thus it happened that henceforth no car could have a front overhang longer than the Hesketh. No rear tire could be fatter than the current Goodyear. And so on.

And no car could, henceforth, as of May 2, 1976, be wider overall than the McLaren M23. Teddy must be gnashing his teeth when he remembers how he smiled at the industrious Frenchmen with their tape measure, last year.



James Hunt, here leading teammate Jochen Mass and Niki Lauda, almost completely obscured behind Hunt's McLaren, won going away, but later his car was disqualified because of a minor technical infraction.

reigning world champion.

At that rate, the Austrian will have his second title wrapped up by August.

There was, to be frank about it, bound to be some imperfection in the quality of Hunt's victory anyway, because Lauda was driving under a physical handicap. The week before, he'd fallen off a tractor (looks like racers are racers no matter what they drive) and cracked a couple of ribs. There was real doubt even to race morning whether he'd be able to drive at all.

"Yes, it's a problem," he admitted. "The doctors have killed the nerve where the

Tyrrell, settled into third and Hunt's teammate Jochen Mass, fourth at the start, made it a close fourth in the race. For a surprising number of laps, these four made a close, fast formation at the front of the race.

It took Hunt 30 laps of relentless pressuring before he could make his way into the lead, outbraking Lauda into the apex of that same first corner. At the same place one lap later he had gained 1.5 seconds, and Niki's gallant run was clearly over. It was only another lap before Mass overtook as well—Depailler had by now spun the six-wheeler off the

F-1 Teams To Appeal Disqualifications

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discovered that the back wheels of Hunt's car, across the outside edges of the tires, were 216.8 centimeters wide. The limit prescribed was 215 centimeters (84.65 inches). They measured it carefully three times but there was no way out. The McLaren technically was illegal, and never mind that in practical terms that it is hardly possible that 5/8 of an inch meant a finishing difference of 31 seconds. The CSI choose to count it a serious infraction. They made the same decision about the Ligier/Matra of Jacques Lafitte, and disqualified Lafitte for the Ligier's rear wing being three centimeters too far aft.

McLaren's Teddy Mayer is going the route of appeal (so is Guy Ligier), first to the Spanish race organizers, and if that doesn't get him anywhere, to the full FIA. It therefore will be weeks before anyone can say whether the sentence will be lightened. "We feel," says an official McLaren statement, "like we have been given the death penalty for a parking ticket."

Mayer goes on to state that, although the team cars both had been checked by the CSI on Friday, and again on Saturday, nobody mentioned the back suspension was too wide. And anyway, the car was exactly the same width mechanically as it had been last August—when, and here's the other irony of the situation, the CSI took the overall width of the McLaren M23, the F-1 world's widest tracked car, as the new standard for 1976. The only difference, he vows, is the new Goodyear tires, which are of a different construction and bulge out beyond the rims when the car is still—but which pull back within the rims at high speed. Goodyear's racing director, Denny Chrobak backs him up on this.

So it would seem that the McLaren was wiped off the slate in Spain because of a very minor dimensional violation, which in any case only applied when the car was stationary, not when the car actually was moving around the track. But the CSI rules do not specify how or when the dimensions should be checked.

This one isn't very nice.—Pete Lyons

Ashland Oil To Supply Indy 500

ASHLAND, Ky.—Ashland Oil, Inc., through its Valvoline Oil Company division, will once again be the primary official oil and fuel supplier at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway for the 1976 Indy 500.

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issuance of the bronze and silver identification badges is tightly controlled by Indy officials and they are highly prized as collectors items.

In last year's Memorial Day Classic, 29 of the starting 33 race cars ran on Ashland Fuel and Valvoline Racing Motor Oil. During each of the past six years at least 24 of the starters at Indy have chosen the Ashland/Valvoline combination to power and protect their cars. In three of those years, Ashland/Valvoline drivers have won the race that is known the world over as the premier automobile racing event.

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Spanish GP Marks European Season, Debut Of New Cars

MADRID—After three "demo-races" in far hemispheres of the world, plus two non-championship events, the F-1 circus finally settled down to the regular grind of the season. From now on the races come thick and fast, and there won't be much time at all to have any second thoughts about design. If any of the new ideas in the pits at Jarama didn't work as foreseen, the designers involved could be in real trouble.

The most intriguing idea by far was the new Project 34 Mark II Elf Tyrrell with its double front wheels (*Or should that be quadruple front wheels?—Ed.*). Ken Tyrrell is well enough pleased with it—indeed, he was cavorting around in Spain like a man who'd just won a sweepstakes, his piratical face split in a perpetual grin—that he's got his lads well along toward building a second race-car six-wheeler. But so far there's only one, and as Patrick Depailler has done the bulk of the testing in it he was rewarded with driving it in its debut event.

Patrick managed third best grid position, 0.59 second behind Hunt's McLaren, the car wouldn't appear to be quite a McLaren-eater, not just yet. However, it would be well to go a little deeper into the lap time story before passing judgement. In fact, the week before during private testing at Jarama both Hunt and Depailler had done equal times (1:18.95).

Spanish GP

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jumped into his teammate Ingo Hoffman's chassis, which was vacant, as poor Ingo had suffered three engine failures in seven laps of practice and had not qualified. He needn't have worried himself too much about it—it was going to fail after three laps of racing with its gear linkage broken anyway.

All four Marchs went out, clean sweep, see the retirements list for why. Add in poor old Depailler's shunt with the new six-wheeler due to his brake failure, and

During official practice McLaren managed to find some extra speed (to 1:18.52) but the Tyrrell never quite reached its testing speed, much to Patrick's puzzlement. The best he was able to do was 1:19.11, which however was during the final session of practice, when the best James could do was only 0.19 faster.

That that was more nearly the relationship between the two cars was shown in the race, when the six-wheeler stayed in close company with both McLarens and Lauda's Ferrari, looking steady and easy to drive despite a case of tire fade from, not the front wheels, but the back ones. After 28 laps, unfortunately, Patrick's brake pedal suddenly went to the floor and by the time he pumped it up

it was too late. He backed the car—thoughtful of him, to back it in—into the catch fences. But the damage was minor and the car will definitely race at Zolder, and Ken's face was still all smiles. He, Patrick, and designer Derek Gardner think the potential of the machine is enormous.

What a pity Gardner wasn't in Spain to see his daring concept work out so well in action. Where he was instead was in England, in a hospital bed. Apparently during the previous week's testing he'd picked up a stomach virus, and the antibiotics prescribed gave him a violent allergic reaction. Progress, thy ways are cruel....

One of the best stories of the Spanish weekend was the obvious return to form of the Lotus team. The troublesome JPS 11 and JPS 12 designs (historians call it the Lotus Type 77—and historians also ask when a Lotus design has not been troublesome) was going distinctly better. It still looked a ragged handler in the hands of both Gunnar Nilsson and Mario Andretti, but the lap speeds were definite-

ly there. The Swede, in his third GP, earned seventh best grid place, and Mario was ninth.

In the race they both ran tight together, embroiled in a dice with Brambilla, Laffite, and Regazzoni; Andretti had to retire with gear selector problems but the checkered flag waved Nilsson off third—which became second pending the result of the Hunt appeal. Colin Chapman looks like a man on the way back up.

One of the most impressive cars in Spain was the newest Ensign, which started from the fifth row and which took Chris Amon into either fifth or fourth place at the end, again depending upon the FIA. Chris had a race-long battle with Carlos Reutemann's Brabham-Alfa which was grand to watch.

All in all, although the fourth GP of the season resulted, officially, in yet another Ferrari victory, the quality of the rest of the entry and the level of technical interest shown made the Spanish GP a heartening introduction to the European season. Maybe all is not lost down the Ferrari drain at that.

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XXII FORMULA ONE GRAND PRIX OF SPAIN, CIRCUITO DEL JARAMA, MADRID, MAY 2, 1976

ENTRY AND QUALIFYING

1-James Hunt, McLaren M23/9, 1:18.52; 2-Niki Lauda, Ferrari 312T2/026, 1:18.84; 3-Patrick Depailler, Tyrrell P34/2, 1:19.11; 4-Jochen Mass, McLaren M23/8/2, 1:19.14; 5-Clay Regazzoni, Ferrari 312T2/025, 1:19.15; 6-Vittorio Brambilla, March 761/01, 1:19.27; 7-Gunnar Nilsson, Lotus 77, 1:19.35; 8-Jacques Laffite, Ligier JS5/01, 1:19.39; 9-Mario Andretti, Lotus 77, 1:19.59; 10-Chris Amon, Ensign MN05, 1:19.83; 11-Carlos Pace, Brabham BT45/3, 1:19.93; 12-Carlos Reutemann, Brabham BT45/1, 1:20.12; 13-John Watson, Penske PC3/02, 1:20.17; 14-Jody Scheckter, Tyrrell 007/6/4, 1:20.19; 15-Jean-Pierre Jarier, Shadow DNS/4A, 1:20.21; 16-Ronnie Peterson, March 761/03, 1:20.34; 17-Hans Stuck, March 761/02, 1:20.40; 18-Arturo Merzario, March 761/04, 1:20.63; 19-Emerson Fittipaldi, Fittipaldi FD04/2, 1:20.71; 20-Alan Jones, Surtees TS19/2, 1:20.87; 21-Jackie Ickx, Williams FW05/1, 1:21.13; 22-Tom Pryce, Shadow DNS/5A, 1:21.19; 23-Michel Leclerc, Williams FW05/2, 1:21.29; 24-Larry Perkins, Ensign MN04, 1:21.52.

RESULTS

1-Lauda, 75 laps or 158.625 miles in 1:42:51.40 for an average speed of 92.488mph; 2-Nilsson, 75; 3-Reutemann, 74; 4-Amon, 74; 5-Pace, 74; 6-Ickx, 74; 7-Pryce, 74; 8-Jones, 74; 9-Leclerc, 73; 10-Regazzoni, 72; 11-Perkins, 72.

DNF: Mass, 65, engine; Jarier, 61, electrical; Scheckter, 53, engine; Watson, 51, engine; Merzario, 36, gearbox; Andretti, 34, gearbox; Depailler, 25, crash; Brambilla, 21, crash; Stuck, 16, crash; Peterson, 11, gearbox; Fittipaldi, 3, gearbox.

DNS: Langer, Kessell; Hoffman; Erli; Emilio Zapico; Emilio DeVilloto.

DSQ: Hunt, overall width; Laffite, wing mounting position.

Mass's spectacular mechanical scatter job on his engine, and the mechanical carnage in Spain was pretty high.

But it was nothing compared to the job the officials did on the results list, which surgery captured all the attention of every newspaper and completely obscured the fact that, despite the dreary outcome, opening round of the European season was quite encouraging. There might be some good racing here yet.

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